

young people connected with it, it had little reforming influence upon the older people. The government was trying to control the sale of liquor by limiting hours of sale and by excluding minors from taverns. For example, the taverns were closed during the time of Sunday morning service. 273 733

Here, then, we have three efforts on the part of villagers and authorities to promote abstinence or temperance. The first, in 1922, used the local governmental machinery but lacked the support of the men who were the only ones with the right to vote. The second was the voluntary association of strong-willed youths, who soon found that formal organizations had short lives in Dragalevtsy. The other method consisted of the mayor's arbitrary edicts, which he had power to make people obey. From time to time he overlooked infringements of his rules, being more interested in avoiding excessive drunkenness on the part of well-known sots than in decreasing the tavern keeper's revenues.

The chief objections raised to the use of liquor were economic rather than moral. Although recreation was not commercialized in our sense of the term, the tavern keepers did make an adequate income from catering to patrons with free time on their hands.

The only formally organized recreational group in the village was the *Yunak* organization. It began its career in the village in 1932. The local group was one of hundreds scattered throughout the whole of Bulgaria for the purpose of organizing the youth for sport and physical education. The activity of this organization was intense in the beginning. Since then, however, interest died down to the point that the young men gathered only two or three times a year for exercise in the schoolyard where there were rings and a horizontal bar, and once a year for election of officers. Many of the members felt that it was an honor to belong because it signified to the rest of the villagers that "you want to be healthy." The older people, however, thought that such an organization was unnecessary since, in their opinion, "if the young people did enough work in the fields and around the stables they would not need any organization for exercise." As is the case with many clubs of this sort, there were four or five people who really carried the load in an effort to keep the group alive. Because this organization was so utterly out of line with the familistic point 529 • 575

529 of view, its members got little encouragement from the older people
575 and had little lasting enthusiasm for its program.

575 The Reading Room Association (*Chitalishte*) was organized
829 locally on February 10, 1921, upon the initiative of men who had
been outside the village and had returned with the desire to raise the
cultural level. From its founding, however, it concerned itself more
with financial than with cultural problems. In the words of the con-
stitution, the purposes of the organization were:

- A. to influence the people of the village, especially the young to self-improvement.
- B. to cause to grow among the people a feeling for public unity in life and for intelligent usage of the village domain.
- C. to cultivate love towards the fatherland and towards the good and morally edifying elements of the national literature.

The *Chitalishte* planned to achieve its purpose by opening a public reading room free for all inhabitants and visitors and supplying the room with suitable books. The *Chitalishte* group also planned to organize evening lectures and other public performances and entertainments "in order to create a patriotic feeling and appreciation of the nation's past."

The first act of the newly organized society was to buy a large sign inscribed with the name of the organization. After that the officers spent money for chairs, lamps, benches, bookcases, stovepipes, and tables, while individuals donated inkstands, water jugs, a box for gathering money, and a picture of the Madonna. Unfortunately this left practically no money for any form of reading matter. The expense of having a share in the construction of the *Obshtina* building further drained the financial resources of the organization. It was also a factor in keeping away prospective members who preferred to wait until the building was paid for before they joined. In 1937 twenty-two people, most of them charter members, were looked upon as active supporters of the work of the *Chitalishte*.

Most of the members were critical of the present officers, and recognized that the organization's activities were at a standstill. When members were asked to tell how they would improve matters if elected

APPENDIX

245

stop to spend money in a generous manner. This is one reason that the peasants complain so bitterly of their dull, monotonous life and long to have their children counted among the white-collar class. 369

Recently Dragalevtsy has become a mountain summer resort. Twelve families have little villas in or near the village, while as many more live in the monastery. These seasonal guests buy most of their produce from the villagers, and patronize Bai Penko's tavern daily. Some, especially the twelve families with summer houses, are counted as real citizens of Dragalevtsy, though the peasants do not try to assimilate them into their informal groups. These summer guests are in a position to do much in the way of village improvement if they cared to seize their opportunities. 529

2. FAMILY GUESTS. Another important influence from outside comes in the form of guests entertained by the family during the course of a year. The numbers of guests from Sofia, from other towns, and from villages are shown in Table 14 below: 574

TABLE 14

GUESTS IN DRAGALEVTSY HOMES DURING THE YEAR 1934, CLASSIFIED
ACCORDING TO DOMICILE (CENSUS OF 1934)

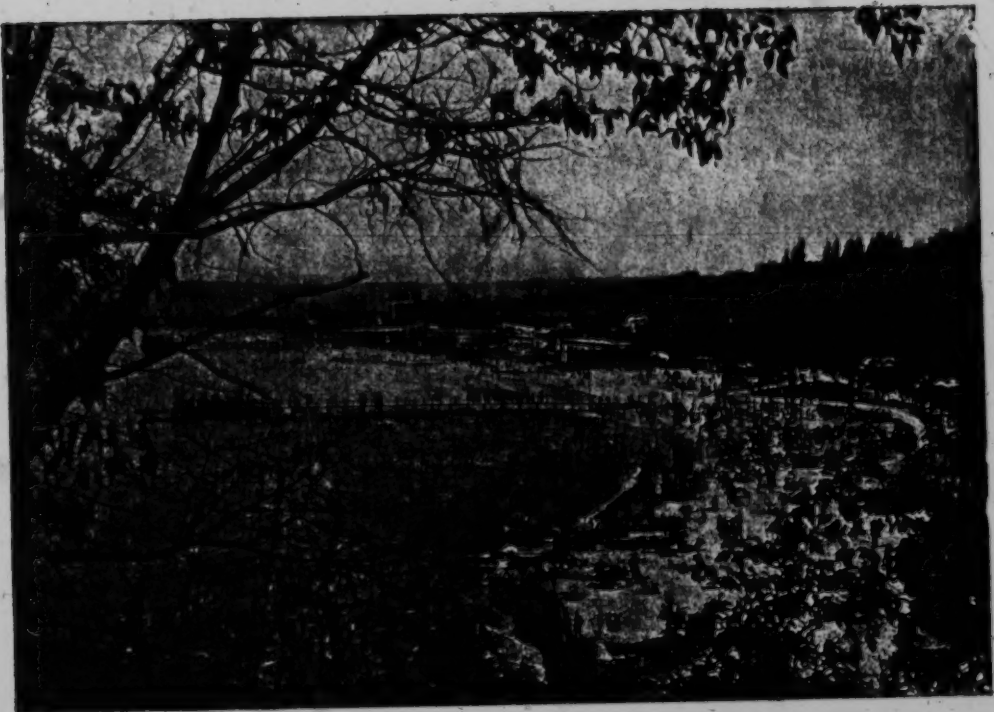
NUMBER OF GUESTS	NUMBER OF FAMILIES ENTERTAINING GUESTS			TOTAL NUMBER OF GUESTS*		
	From City	From Town	From Village	From City	From Town	From Village
0.....	96	249	62	0	0	0
1-10.....	125	8	135	786	36	824
11-20.....	34	0	58	555	0	888
21-30.....	3	0	14	75	0	380
31-40.....	4	0	1	150	0	35
41-50.....	5	0	0	250	0	0
Over 50.....	1	0	1	100	0	65
Total.....	172	8	209	1,916	36	2,192

*Computed from actual figures and not from class midpoints.

Out of the 268 families that reported, 96 families do not have any guests from Sofia during the year. The guests visiting the 172 remaining families total 1,916 people. In other words, if all the people who come from Sofia to visit stayed in the village and did not return home, the village would little more than double its present population, ignoring the possible natural increase. Of course, the total of 1,916 does not necessarily include that many people, but certainly over 1,000. These visitors are relatives or friends, generally of peasant origin, who have gone to the big city and succeeded. As one stands in

II: Loglo S-4 (no date) 1936 EEI Bulgaria EEI

529
361



VARN4: A VIEW OF THE BEACH

[Facing P. 16]

GEOGRAPHICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL NOTES

of Razlog on the upper reaches of the river Mesta may serve as a convenient centre for excursions in this maze of mountains mostly clad with pine and fir forests. The three beautiful mountain lakes dominated by the majestic summit of the El-Tepe, the highest peak of the Pirrin range, reaching an altitude of 2684 metres, may be easily reached from the townlet of Bansko, a few kilometres to the south of Razlog. Tourist huts have been erected at several points, and recently excellent roads have been constructed, so that the more adventurous type of tourist, intent on roaming off the beaten track, can indulge in protracted and most enjoyable rambles in what is certainly a *terra incognita*, even to most Bulgarians.

It is astonishing that the Bulgarian Government has done nothing to popularise Sofia as a tourist centre, and yet few towns in Eastern Europe can rival it as such. It is at a convenient driving distance from the Balkan mountains which offer a veritable kaleidoscope of enchanting views. Century old oak and beech forests cover generally the rolling undulating mountain valleys, their shaded glens offering the most delectable relaxation after the heat of the plain. Another attractive forest resort is Tcham-Koria lying on the heavily wooded slopes of the Rila, amid enchanting mountain scenery, at a distance of 69 klm. to the south east of Sofia. The greatest attraction of Sofia is of course its mineral and thermal springs. In the centre of the town is a modern bathing establishment, built on the site of the ancient Roman thermal baths, and endowed with an electro-therapeutic section. In close proximity to Sofia are a number of other thermal springs most of which are endowed with excellent bathing accomodation and easily accessible from Sofia by either tram, train, or motor bus. Such are the thermal establishments of Bankia, one of the finest in Bulgaria, that of Gorna-Bania, Ovtcha-Kupel, and of Kniajevo. Bulgaria is

BULGARIA-PAST & PRESENT

312
529 one of the richest countries in the world as regards mineral and thermal springs of all kinds. Among the most noted mineral springs is that of Solu-Dervent, lying at about 72 klm. from Sofia, on the railway line to Plovdiv, it possesses a high radioactivity, 588₁₀₋₁₀ Curies, and a temperature of 65° centigrade, and is specially recommended for cancer. Another most attractive watering place is that of Hissar, some 45 klm. north of Plovdiv. Within a radius of two kilometres there are twenty springs, all varying in their composition and their temperatures. The present baths are built on the site of the old Roman ones. The temperature of the water is 47° C. with a radioactivity of 114₁₀₋₁₀ Curies; it is noted for its curative properties for all diseases of the liver and kidneys. Hissar possesses another great attraction, that of its Roman walls, built in the form of a rectangle. It is supposed to be the old Roman town of Diocletianopolis which successfully resisted in 587 the siege of the Avars. The present walls were restored in the reign of Justinian I but there is a Roman inscription at the Momina Baths dating from 308 A. D. Its ruins would form a most interesting source of study to archeologists while taking the waters at this most agreeable Spa. It is surrounded by rose gardens and possesses delightful shaded walks rendering it a most agreeable residence during May and June, all the more so since it possesses excellent hotels and pensions. At that time of the year visitors at Hissar can easily visit the famous Valley of Roses without interrupting their treatment, for Karlovo, Kalofer and Kazanlik, the centres of the Attar of roses industry, are all within easy reach, as well as the famous Shipka Monastery. A railway line connects Hissar with Plovdiv, formerly known as Philippolis. This is a town with a most picturesque aspect, being built on five hills of syenite, two of which have been turned into parks. The thickly wooded Sehayat Tepe is unique in its kind, com-

GEOGRAPHICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL NOTES

manding a superb view over the vast Thracian plain with 529• the Maritsa river winding its course through the fertile fields and the majestic mass of the Rhodopes looming large on the southern horizon. Another town which can hardly be beaten for its picturesque appearance, is Tirnovo, the ancient capital of the country, built on the steep banks of the river Yantra which meanders through the town. No visitor to Bulgaria should miss visiting these two towns, which for their quaintness and scenic beauty have few rivals in the Near East.

But from the point of view of the holiday maker, the greatest attraction is provided by Varna. A score of years ago it was a squalid, sordid hamlet, an open roadstead at which one could with difficulty land when the wind was blowing from the north or east. Now, it has been transformed into a modern town with wide boulevards and an excellent port. It possesses one of the most beautiful parks in Europe situated on the cliffs overhanging the Black Sea and commanding enchanting views along its littoral. Varna possesses a magnificent beach of fine sand and a most modern and elegant sea-bathing establishment. The town is provided with a casino and comfortable hotels, and actually the municipality is contemplating the construction of a big modern hotel, so as to avoid the shortage of accommodation which is usually felt during the summer months.

The creation of this modern town of Varna, with all its amenities and with its unrivalled park, is the best standing testimonial of the Bulgarians' untiring and unrelenting energy. Varna having been despoiled of its hinterland after the transfer of the Dobrudja to Rumania declined in importance as a trading centre and its inhabitants lost their means of livelihood. They set themselves with unremitting toil and sacrifices to transform their town into what is now the premier watering-place on the Black

BULGARIA-PAST & PRESENT

529 Sea. Their success is all the more remarkable owing to their extreme poverty, which is still easily discernible, but their indomitable industry and unrivalled assiduity has overcome all obstacles. Of them it cannot be said that:

„Chill penury repressed their noble rage
And froze the genial current of the soul.“

The Bulgarian is in fact an indefatigable and most perseverent worker with the constructive instinct highly developed, the only thing needed apparently is coordination of individual efforts, as they are usually mutually opposed, and this coordination has been achieved at Varna with happy results for the town.

The advantages of Varna are becoming known in Central Europe and every summer Hungarians, Poles, Czechslovakians and Austrians flock in hundreds to this sea resort. The municipality has recently converted the monastery of St. Constantine, some nine kilometres to the north of Varna, into a comfortable hostelry. Situated as it is in the midst of an extensive park overlooking the sea, it forms an additional attraction to visitors, while to the south of the town lie the extensive forests of the Longosa, as well as the estuary of the river Kamtchia which provide other delightful outings and excursions. To the visitors from Central Europe the greatest attraction is the extremely low cost of living. For a short time they can imagine they have been transformed into American millionaires and indulge in what the Bulgarians consider riotous living. The latter have learnt to act as excellent hosts to their visitors and stop at no sacrifice at making them comfortable. Their honest, and kindly manners are simply disarming and largely compensate for the absence of such comforts as the Westerner has come to look upon as indispensable. The visitor from Central Europe has usually little money to spend, but in

GEOGRAPHICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL NOTES

comparison with Bulgarian standards he is still a Croesus. However, such income as is derived from visitors does not suffice to cover the outlay of the town. Taxation is extremely heavy, and the inhabitants complain that they can only make the two ends meet with the greatest difficulty. According to a report compiled by Prof. Tsolakov, and published by the Varna School of Higher Studies, the estimated revenue of the Varna municipality for the financial year 1932-3, from the tax on buildings and professions, was respectively 25, and 210 million leva, but the actual revenue was only 13,704,418 and 179,722,752, and other sources of revenue were even less promising. It would be well if the inhabitants of Varna did something to attract a more wealthy *clientèle* than the poverty stricken mid-Europeans. Judging from a series of articles which the French Academician, Louis Bertrand, published in the *Revue des deux Mondes* at the end of 1934, the Italians are developing Cyrenaica as a health resort and endowing it with big hotels in the hope of attracting the wealthy Greeks of Egypt, and they rely to allure them thither largely on the consideration that it was once a famous Greek colony.

„A Cyrene, on se propose d'attirer pour l'été l'opulente société Grecque d'Alexandrie et du Caire. Les Hélienes... trouveront ici plus de fraîcheur que dans les petites stations estivales de l'Eubée ou de l'Attique... Enfin les dirigeants italiens comptent sur le patriotisme exalté des Hélienes, qui voudront venir admirer et vénérer ici les vestiges d'une de leur plus ancienne colonie“.

Varna may boast of the same privilege, it was anciently known as Odessus and was founded by the Milesians in the year 585 B. C. It was one of the few Greek towns which under Roman rule retained the right to strike coins and this testifies to its importance. It possesses a museum in which a vast number of Greek works of art have been collected and as most of the Bulgarian towns on the Black Sea coast littoral have likewise been founded

BULGARIA-PAST & PRESENT

• 529 by Greek colonists, and one of them Mesembria, possesses some remarkable ruins of Byzantine churches, with a wealth of ornamentation and mosaics that have rightly won for it the appellation of "the Bulgarian Ravenna", it would be well if all these facts were utilised for propaganda purposes. Varna possesses a vast advantage over Cyrenaica not only owing to its climate, its luxuriant vegetation and charming surroundings but also in still possessing a small number of inhabitants of Greek origin who may be utilised as a focus for attracting Greek visitors. Nothing indeed will incite Hellenes to visit the Bulgarian Black sea board so much as the knowledge that they will be welcomed in their native tongue, that they will be able to attend divine service in one of their own churches, and have the possibility to ascertain that the spirit of their race survives in spite of the "silent artillery of time".

Surely the inhabitants of Varna can look on good humouredly on a few patriotic manifestations which are likely to follow when "Greek meets Greek", nothing but good will ensue for all the parties concerned from such outbursts, and it will constitute one more "excellent proof of the liberalism and tolerance the Bulgarians have always manifested for all ethnic minorities living in their midst.

11: Logio S-4 (no date) 1936 EEI Bulgaria L&I

•529



VARNA: A VIEW FROM THE PARK

345



SOFIA: THE OPERA HOUSE

[Facing p. 65]